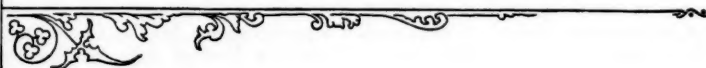




Chambers's Journal

SIXTH SERIES.



CULROSS.

By JOHN GEDDIE, Author of *The Fringes of Fife, &c.*



CURLED away in the warmest nook of the shores of Fife is an ancient little royal burgh which figures on the maps as Culross, but to its neighbours and familiars is known as 'Coo'ross.' Steep-terraced braesides, well clad with wood, fence it in on the land side from the assaults of the angrier winds; and the very sea visits in gentler mood than elsewhere the curve of its beautiful bay. By these placid waters, at the foot of its sunny slope, Culross seems to have dozed off into a dream. A stranger wandering into the maze of its steep and winding 'causeys' might rub his eyes and wonder whether he had not stumbled into a Scottish 'Sleepy Hollow.' In the aspect of these narrow cobble-stoned streets and venerable dwellings there is less to remind him of the end of the nineteenth than of the beginning of the seventeenth century. It was then that Culross came to its full growth; since, it has stood still or has 'crined' away. Perhaps a Culrossian of those palmy times would wonder more at the change that has come over the place than does the modern that so little has changed in three centuries. The old industries on which the burgh thrive have taken flight, either to newer centres or off the face of the earth. The streets once 'dirled like a Cooross girdle' to the cheery ring of hammer on anvil from its sixteen smithies; now the hand-made girdle itself is fast becoming, like Culross, a piece of antiquity.

More than a hundred sail of vessels, it is said, were wont once on a time to crowd the bay, waiting to load coal or salt. The town had fifty salt-pans at work. There were other thriving industries in the old burgh—shoemaking and gardening among them. Cooross brogues and Cooross leeks were almost as well known as Cooross girdles or the Cooross salt-pans and coal-heughs. But trade has well-nigh deserted town and bay for many a year. The germ of more than one great modern invention first sprang to notice in this quiet nook by the Forth. Culross has planted, in such matters

as the mining of coal under the sea-bottom and the illuminating power of coal-gas, but others have reaped. It has fallen out of the track of progress, whether by water or land. The railway has passed it by; keeping the high ground well in rear; it is two or three miles' walk uphill to the nearest station. So, too, the lines of traffic by sea have left it on one side; only at certain tides can steamers venture into the shallow bay as far as Culross pier, which, after all, is little more than a 'rickle of stones' rising at low-water out of a dismal expanse of mud.

Then, the town is 'on the way to nowhere.' Those who go to Culross go 'aince errand' to see it; and having gone once, they are pretty sure to return again and again. There is an air of quaint seclusion about the place that is restful and soothing, especially to the eyes and thoughts of those who go thither out of the bustle of modern town-life. Here is a little eddy where some of the forms and fashions of an older society, which elsewhere have been swept out of sight and mind, have survived and make their slow and quiet round affected but little by the scour and rush of the 'struggle for existence' outside. Something of the spirit, as well as of the domestic architecture, of the days when James VI. was king, and did not disdain to taste of the burgh's hospitality and mark its growing trade, must surely linger around the Cross and beside the 'causeys' of Culross. The inhabitants, like the houses, have leisure and opportunity each to develop an individuality of his own, instead of having character and features rubbed down to a common likeness, as in the younger places which have outstripped the old town in the race.

Even in matters municipal or political Culross has until the other day suffered, or enjoyed, a curious isolation. Although by history and situation attached to the west of Fife, the parish and burgh, before the Boundary Commission took the anomaly in hand, formed a sporadic fragment of the great shire of Perth—'Perth upon Forth.' It

was a mark upon the map that Culross dwelt alone; that it had an age and character of its own that distinguished it even from the long and ancient line of its neighbours, the quaint coast burghs of Fife. But not only have its frontiers been rectified; Culross is threatened with the invasion of that fellest of all the agents of change, the railway. There is a bill in the present session of parliament, and about to become law, which will draw a line from the main system of north and south traffic into the heart of Old Culross—a dividing-line, as is feared as well as hoped by many, in the fortunes and history of the place. The scar of a railway-cutting will disfigure those verdant slopes and hanging woods of Torry and High Valleyfield which dwellers by the bay of Culross have fondly likened to the surroundings of the 'Cornice Road' at Nice. A huge cantle will be cut from the gardens and orchards of gray old houses in Newmills and Low Valleyfield, once the young and successful rivals in trade of their neighbour Culross. Along the shore, within the burgh bounds, over the grassy flat of the 'Pow' which once served the town as a harbour, and over the spot where St Thenew must have landed from her crazy shallop to bear St Mungo and to begin Culross history, will rise a railway embankment, shutting out the view of the bay and of Preston Island and the opposite shore of Lothian from the road. The station will be planted where now stands the 'Fishing Cottage' and its pond—itsself the site of the 'bucket-pat' of one of Culross's old salt-pans—raised by Sir Robert Preston, the friend of Pitt, as 'a memorial of the symposia at Dagenham Reach,' where he was wont to hold what has since become one of our political institutions known as the Ministerial Whitebait Dinner at Greenwich.

This is but the beginning of the removal of old landmarks which the coming of the railway to Culross must necessarily bring about, as the line is carried along the sea-front of the town, by the Sand Haven, the West Green, and the Playfield, and under the Hanging Gardens, round the rocky bluffs, and below the plumed and towered height of Dunimarle towards Kincardine. No doubt the intrusion is inevitable, and in many ways will be beneficial. It should bring back some traffic and movement to the deserted streets. Culross will become more known and frequented as a seaside resort and as a museum of the Scottish house architecture of other centuries; it is promised, also, an 'esplanade' and other modern amenities hitherto beyond its reach and thought. But lovers of the old town will not regard the coming revolution without a feeling of wistful regret; the New Culross will never be to them as the Culross they have known.

Let us hope that Time, even with the railway as the instrument of his changes, will continue to deal tenderly with the place. It is not every burgh even in Fife that can boast, and produce memorials, of fourteen centuries of history. Better

vantage-ground for looking down this long vista of years than the shore-level, where the new line is to break its way through what were once the East and West Ports of the town, is the approach to Culross from the north. This North or Abbey Gate was probably where now stands the Chapel Barn, on the road from East Grange Station; and a little farther on, at the brow of the slope, where the steep causeway runs down and spreads among the houses of the burgh, one comes to the gray tower of the Abbey Church. Only fragments remain of the cloisters and other monastic buildings belonging to the Cistercian Abbey which Malcolm Earl of Fife founded here in 1217—enough, however, to show that they possessed beauty of architecture as well as beauty of situation. The nave of the church has almost wholly disappeared; but the massive central tower, crowned with modern pinnacles, still rears itself intact; and the choir continues to be the parish place of worship. From the summit of the tower, or from the platform surmounting the groined cloister vaults, in the manse garden, a glorious prospect of land and water is unfolded. The burgh huddled below is revealed only in glimpses of red roofs and quaint gable-ends. The Abbey Gardens, still well planted with orchard trees, diversified here and there with the thick plumage of the plane or the dark silhouette of a cedar, are spread over the spacious brae-side. Crowning the slope, and ranked alongside the church, the stately façade of the mansion or 'palace' of Culross Abbey appears through the trees. It is nearly three centuries since the first Lord Kinloss, Master of the Rolls to the 'wisest fool in Christendom,' reared this fragment of a great design; but it looks almost of yesterday beside its neighbour, the Norman tower.

Tower and braes hang half-protectingly, half-threateningly, over Culross. Throughout the greater part of its history the burgh has been thus dominated by the church. At the founding of the Abbey—even at the reputed date of the battle fought hard by between King Duncan's host and the Danes, we are but half-way to the beginning of Culross annals. Down near the shore the foundations of St Mungo's Chapel, built by that Archbishop Blackadder who was a pupil of Dunbar, and who raised the Blackadder Crypt at Glasgow, remain to remind us of the story of the miraculous birth by the water-side of Glasgow's patron saint. No doubt the famous Culdee seminary and religious house, where Servanus entertained Palladius and brought up young Kentigern, stood where afterwards rose the Abbey of the White Monks. They were great in gardening, illuminating, and other crafts, were the members of the later religious fraternity. But they had their hours of relaxation, in which the townsfolk had a share; and Mr Beveridge, the historian of Culross, believes that their miracle and mystery plays were performed on the green

platform by the sea, still called the 'Playfield.' The burgh, too, had its 'gaudé-days;' and until ill-fortune and stern Presbyterian discipline had curtailed its property and sobered its spirit, it spread the street with green branches on St Serf's Day, and rode in procession, led by the 'captain-ensign' and attendant musketeers, with the burgh colours displayed, and 'busked' the Cross and the Tron with flowers, at the annual riding of the marches on Whitsun-Monday.

Mighty, too, was the power of the pulpit in Culross in Reformation, in Covenanting, and in Secession times, and notably when James Fraser of Brea or Dr John Erskine, the leader of the 'Evangelical' party in the Kirk, were ministers of the parish, or when Row or Gillespie, from the neighbouring Carnock, or Boston of Ettrick, came to preach in the Abbey Church. But in its best days Culross had its resident landed magnates, its well-to-do merchants, and its thriving guilds and crafts, whose influence balanced or supplemented that of the clergy. It was in those days—the closing years of the sixteenth and the early part of the seventeenth century—that most of the fine old private dwellings which are the characteristic glory of Culross arose around the Cross or along the 'causeys' leading to the Great and the Little Sand Haven. One is pointed out as the house where Bishop Leighton the saintly was wont to lodge; another, beside the ancient building with the flanking tower known as the 'Study,' is surmised to have been the heritage of Duncan Primrose, the worthy Culross girdlesmith, who became ancestor of the Earls of Rosebery.

But none other of the venerable edifices in which Culross is so rife is so full of character, and at the same time so battered and woebegone in aspect, as the pair that bear the name of the 'Palace' or the 'Colonel's Close.' They stand back in their courtyard as if shunning observation, and are little better than empty shells. But the older of the two, which has on it the date 1597 and the initials of the first Sir George Bruce of Carnock, has still in one of its mouldering rooms the remains of painted wall decorations and half-obliterated black-letter devices that are probably nearly three centuries old. The builder was the founder of Culross's fortunes in industries that grew and decayed long before some of the great modern centres of trade had come into being. His wonderful 'Moat,' from

which he worked the minerals lying under the bed of the Forth, brought hither, among other admirers, James VI. and the Water Poet. It was 'drowned;' and most of the stones of it left by the 'Borrowing Days storm' are said to have gone to build Leith Pier. Traces of it may still, however, be seen above low-water mark, near the pier of Culross, which, on the other side, is flanked by the 'Blue Boulder' where the town thrust out of sight those who died of the plague.

It is a curious fact that from this old Culross magnate are descended most of the present proprietors of land in the neighbourhood. After him and his son and namesake, who has a stately monument in the North Chapel of the Abbey Church, his house was occupied by the Earls of Kincardine until they flitted to the more imposing pile of Culross Abbey, where by-and-by they were succeeded by the Cochrane, Earls of Dundonald, one of whom was the famous naval hero, who spent there an adventurous and neglected boyhood. But much more closely associated with the 'Colonel's Close' was 'Black Colonel John Erskine,' father of the great authority on Scots law, and grandfather of the eloquent divine of the same name—a pious and conscientious but somewhat peppery-tempered old soldier and laird, who is said to have dearly loved a law-plea, and who on occasion has sallied forth, literally sword in hand, to do battle for his rights against the council and bailies. Ralph Erskine tutored his sons here when the last century was young; and his cousin, the 'White Colonel John,' of Carriden, was his neighbour in the adjoining house.

We might linger long about Culross, and tell much about its old customs and old crafts and craftsmen, especially of the rise and fall of its fame in the making of girdles; of the visitors who have bent their steps thither—among them, it is known, or said, James Duke of Monmouth, Daniel Defoe, William Cobbett, Scott in his failing years, and Turner the painter; of the Tolbooth, whose picturesque bell-tower overlooks the Tron, the open space of the Sand Haven, and the harbour, with all of good or ill omen to the town that has happened within or beside it; and of a score of other memorials of the burgh and its past life written on the fronts of its ancient houses. But enough has perhaps been said to show how much it is worth a visit before the hands of time and change are laid on it more heavily.



JOHN BURNET OF BARN'S.

CHAPTER XLII.—OF A VOICE IN THE EVENTIDE.



F the events of the time following there is little need to give an exact account. There was some law business to be gone through in connection with my cousin's death and the disposing of the estate, which went to an east-country laird, a Whig of the Whigs, and one like to make good and provident use of it. Then, when I would have returned to Tweeddale, I received a post from my good kinsman, Dr Gilbert Burnet, which led me first to Edinburgh, and then so far afield as London itself. For it was necessary, in the great confusion of affairs, that I should set myself right with the law, and gain reparation for my sometime forfeited lands.

So to the great city I went, posting by the main road from Edinburgh, and seeing a hundred things which were new and entertaining. I abode there most all the winter, during the months of December, January, February, and March, for there was much to do and see. My lodging was in my kinsman's house, near the village of Kensington, and there I met a great concourse of remarkable folk whose names I had heard of and have heard of since. Notably there were Master John Dryden, the excellent poet; my Lord Sandwich; and a very brisk, pleasing gentleman, one Mr Pepys of the Admiralty. Also, I had many chances of meeting with gentlemen of like degree with myself, and many entertaining diversions we had together.

But when the spring came, and there was no further need for tarrying in the south, with a light heart I set off homewards once more. I journeyed by Peterborough and York, then came northwards by the great Northumberland road, through the towns of Newcastle and Morpeth, and crossed the Cheviot Hills, which minded me much of my own glen. At Coldstream I crossed the Tweed, and rode over the Lammermoors to Edinburgh. I stayed there no longer than my duty demanded; and when all was settled, one bright spring day just after noon, set out for Barn's.

The day, I remember, was one of surprising brightness, clear, sunshiny, and soft as midsummer. There are few ways I know better than that from the capital to my home—the bare, windy moorlands for one half, and the green glens and pleasant waters for the other.

At Leadburn was the inn where I had first met my servant Nicol, my trusty comrade through so many varying fates. I drank a glass of wine at the place for no other cause than a sentimental remembrance.

When I rode through the village of Broughton, and came to the turn of the hill at Dreva, the sun was already westerling. The goodly valley, all golden with evening light, lay beneath me.

Down the long winding hill-path I rode, watch-

ing the shadows flit before me and thinking strange thoughts. Fronting me over the broad belt of woodland I saw the gray towers of Dawyck and the green avenues of grass running straight to the hill. By-and-by the road took me under the trees, among the cool shades, and the smell of pine and budding leaves. There was a great crooning of wood-doves and the sighing of the tenderest breezes. Shafts of light still crept among the trunks, but the soft darkness of spring was almost at hand. My heart was filled with a great exaltation. The shadow of the past seemed to slip from me like an old garment, and I hummed as I rode: 'There's an eye that ever weeps, and a fair face will be fain, When I ride through Annan Water with my bonny bands again.'

Suddenly I stopped, for somewhere I heard a faint melody, the voice of a girl singing. 'Twas that voice I should know among ten thousand, the only one in all the world for me, which had so often spoken brave, kind words.

I stood in shadow and watched her as she came in sight, sauntering up the little green glade with a basket of spring flowers swinging on her arm. Her hat of white satin hung loose over her hair; and as she walked lightly, now in the twilight, now in a sudden shaft of the western sun, she looked fairer than aught I had ever seen.

'Oh, you have come back at last,' she cried; 'and I have looked so long for you.'

'Indeed, dear lass, I have come back, and, by God's grace, to go no more away.'

Then, leading my horse, I walked by her side down the broad path to the house. We spoke nothing, our hearts being too busy with the delights of each other's presence. The crowning stone was added to my palace of joy, and in that moment it seemed as if earth could contain no more of happiness, and that all the sorrows of the past were well worth encountering for the ecstasy of the present.

At the lawn of Dawyck I stopped and took my love's fair hands in mine.

'Marjory,' I said, 'once, many years ago, you sang me a verse and made me a promise. I cannot tell how bravely you have fulfilled it. You have endured all my hardships, and borne me company where I bade you; and now all is done with, and we are returned to peace and our own place. Now it is my turn for troth-plighting, and I give you it with all my heart. God bless you, my own dear maid.' And I repeated softly a verse of her song:

'First shall the heavens want starry light,
The seas be robbed of their waves;
The day want sun, the sun want bright,
The night want shade, and dead men graves;
The April flowers and leaf and tree,
Before I false my faith to thee.'

And I kissed her and bade farewell, with the echo still ringing in my ears, 'To thee, to thee.'

I rode through the great shadows of the wood, scarce needing to pick my path in a place my horse knew so well; for once again I was on Maisie. The stillness clung to me like a garment; and out of it, from high up on the hillside, came a bird's note, clear, tremulous, like a bell. Then the trees ceased, and I was out on the shorn, green banks, 'neath which the river gleamed and rustled. Then all of a sudden I had rounded the turn of the hill, and there before me in the dimness stood the old gray tower, which was mine, and had been my fathers' since first man tilled a field in the dale. I crossed the little bridge with a throbbing heart, and lo! there was the smell of lilac and gean-tree blossom as of old coming in great gusts from the lawn. Then all was confusion and much hurrying about, and a thousand kindly greetings. But in especial I remember Tam Todd, the placid, the imperturbable, who clung to my hand and sobbed like the veriest child, 'Oh laird, ye've been lang o' comin'!'

CHAPTER XLIII.—HOW NICOL PLENDERLEITH SOUGHT HIS FORTUNE ELSEWHERE.

NOW at last I am come to the end of my tale, and have little more to set down. It was on a very fresh, sweet May morning that Marjory and I were married in the old kirk of Lyne, which stands high on a knoll above the Lyne water, with green hills huddled around the door. There was a great concourse of people, for half the country-side dwelled on our land. Likewise, when all was done, there was the greatest feast spread in Barnes that living man had ever seen. But in a little all was over, the last guest had clambered heavily on his horse and ridden away, and we were left alone.

The evening, I remember, was one riot of golden light and rich shadow. The sweet-scented air stole into the room with promise of the fragrant out-of-doors, and together we went out to the lawn, and thence down by the trees to the brink of Tweed, and along by the great pool and the water-meadows. And as we walked together, I and my dear lady, in that soft twilight in the green world, a peace, a delight, a settled hope grew upon us, and we went in silence, speaking no word the one to the other. By-and-by we passed through the garden where the early lilies stood in white battalions, and entered the dining-hall, where hang the portraits of my folk. Then, while the light faded, the old, stately dames looked down at us from their frames with an air, as it seemed to me, all but kindly, as if they laughed to see us playing in the old comedy which they had played themselves.

I turned to her with whom I had borne so many perils.

'Dear heart,' I said, 'you are the best and fairest of them all. These old men and women lived in other times, when life was easy and little like our perplexed and difficult years. Nevertheless, the virtue of old times is the same for us, and if a man take but the world as he find it, and set himself manfully to it with good heart and brave spirit, he will find the way grow straight under his feet. Heaven bless you, dear, for now we are comrades together on the road, to cheer each other when the feet grow weary.'

On the morning of the third day from the time I have written of I was surprised at seeing my servant Nicol coming into my study with a grave face, as if he had some weighty matter to tell. Since I had come home I purposed to keep him always with me, to accompany me in sport, and see to many things on the land which none could do better than he. Now he sought an audience with a half-timid, bashful look, and when I bade him be seated he flicked his boots uneasily with his hat, and looked askance.

'I ha'e come to bid ye fareweel, sir,' at length he said slowly.

I sprang up in genuine alarm.

'What nonsense is this?' I cried. 'You know fine, Nicol, that you cannot leave me. We have been too long together.'

'I maun gang,' he repeated sadly. 'I'm loath to dae't, but there's nae help for't.'

'But what?' I cried. 'Have I not been a good friend to you, and your comrade in many perils? Is there anything I can do more for you? Tell me and I will do it.'

'Na, na, Maister John. Ye've aye been the best o' maisters. I've a' thing I could wish. Dinna think I'm no' grateful.'

'Then, for Heaven's sake, tell me the reason, man. I never thought you would treat me like this, Nicol.'

'Oh sir, can ye no' see?' the honest fellow cried, with tears in his eyes. 'Ye've been sae long wi' me that I thoct ye kened my natur'. Fechtin' and warstin' and roamin' about the world are the very breath o' life to me. I see ye here settled sae braw and cauty, and the auld hoose o' Barnes lookin' like itsel' again. And I thinks to mysel', "Nicol Plenderleith, lad, this is no' for you. This is no' the kind o' life that ye can lead. Ye've nae mair business here than a craw among throstles." And the thoct mak's me dowie, for I canna get by't. I whiles think o' mysel' bidin' quiet here and gettin' aulder and aulder, till the time passes when I'm still brisk and venture-some, and I'm left to naething but regrets. I maun be up and awa', laird—I carena whither. We're a' made different; and I was aye queer and daft, and no' like ither folk. Ye winna blame me?'

'But where would you go?' I asked.

'I kenna yet,' he said. 'But there's aye things for a man like me somewhere on the earth. I'm

thinkin' o' gaun back to the abroad, whaur there's like to be a steer for some time to come. It's the life I want, and no' guid-fortune or bad-fortune, so I carena what happens. I trust I may see ye again, Maister John, afore I dee.'

There was nothing for it but to agree, and agree I did, though with a heavy heart and many regrets. I gave him a horse to take him to Leith, and offered him a sum of money. This he would have none of, but took instead a pair of little, old pistols which had been my father's.

I never saw him again, though often I have desired it; but years after I heard of him, and that in the oddest way. I corresponded to some little extent with folk in the Low Countries, and in especial with one Master Ebenezer van Gliccken, a learned man and one of great humour in converse. It was at the time when there was much fighting between the French and the Dutch, and one morn I received a letter from this Master van Gliccken, written from some place whose name I have forgot, a rascally little Holland town in the south. He wrote of many things, of some points in Latin scholarship, of the vexatious and most unpolitic state of affairs in the land, and finally concluded with this, which I transcribe:

'Lastly, my dear Master John, I will tell you a tale which, as it concerns the glory of your countrymen, you may think worth hearing. As you know well, this poor town of ours has lately been the centre of a most bloody strife, for the French forces have assaulted it on all sides; and though, by God's grace, they have failed to take it, yet it has suffered many sore afflictions. In particular there was a fierce attack made upon the

side which fronts the river both by boat and on foot. On the last day of the siege a sally was made from the gate of the corner tower, which nevertheless was unsuccessful, our men being all but enclosed and some of the enemy succeeding in entering the gate. One man in particular—a Scot, as I have heard, Nicolo Plenderleet by name—with two others who were both slain, made his way to the battlements. The gate was shut, and to all appearance his death was certain. But they knew not the temper of their enemy, for, springing on the summit of the wall, he dared all to attack him. When the defenders pressed on he laid about him so sturdily that three fell under his sword.

'Then, when he could no longer make resistance, and bullets were pattering around him like hail, and his cheek was bleeding with a deep wound, his spirit seemed to rise the higher. For, shouting out taunts to his opponents, he broke into a song, keeping time all the while with the thrusts of his sword. Then, bowing gallantly and saluting with his blade his ring of foes, he sheathed his weapon, flung it from him, and, joining his hands above his head, dived sheer and straight into the river, and, swimming easily, reached the French lines. At the sight those of his own side cheered, and even our men, whom he had so tricked, could scarce keep from joining.

'As regards this Scot, I may mention for your satisfaction that in person he was tall and thin, with black hair and the most bronzed skin I have ever seen on a man.' . . .

When I read this letter to Marjory her eyes were filled with tears, and for myself I could speak to no one on that day.

WHAT IS AN EDGE?



THE edge of a tool has two parts—firstly, the wedge-like slope of the blade in general; and, secondly, the slight bevel given as a finishing-touch to make the edge proper.

The one is formed by grinding, the other by sharpening on the oilstone, or setting. A blade is, in fact, nothing but a long, thin wedge or inclined plane—with this condition: that, whereas the resisting substance is generally driven up an inclined plane, the substance in this case remains stationary and the plane is driven between its particles. It is given an edge for the same reason that a ship has a sharp bow—to make the friction as small as possible.

Take the case of a knife cutting a piece of wood. In order that a small amount of pressure may force it through, two things are necessary: the slope of the blade must be gradual and its edge must be sharp. It is evident that the latter is far the more important. The bulk of the blade is employed only in splitting the wood;

it is the edge which first separates the particles, and most of the friction takes place here. The operation of cutting is simply the pushing aside the particles of the substance. These particles have a natural tendency to cling together. A blunt edge presents to them a larger face, and will have to push aside a greater number.

The cutting substance itself, also, must be strongly cohesive; otherwise its own particles would be turned aside, or, in the vulgar tongue, it would lose its edge. For this reason steel and diamond are preferable. Every one knows that in a surgical operation a sharp lancet causes the least pain; and it is evident from what we have said that it is because it produces less jarring in the resisting nerves while separating them.

Little scientific knowledge is required to be aware that the harder steel is the better it cuts. What makes steel hard is not so well known. The manufacture of tool-steel is, indeed, interesting. There is a common impression that iron and steel are the same metal, only one is

tempered. As a matter of fact they are different chemical substances. Tool-steel is a combination of iron and carbon, which can be welded and which will harden in cold water. The more carbon there is the harder the steel will be; and it might be thought that by increasing this element the steel might be made indefinitely hard. But there is a limit. To make a tool you must be able to weld the steel into shape. The more carbon is employed the less the temperature to which the whole can be raised without crumbling when welded. It has to be raised to a red-heat, and consequently only about 1.1 per cent. of carbon can be usually combined. With 2 per cent. the steel cannot be forged.

'Cementation' is the process by which steel is made. Wrought-iron bars are raised to a very high temperature, and in this condition the carbon is absorbed. This makes 'blister-steel.' From 'blister-steel,' again, 'shearing steel' is manufactured. This steel, while being of good quality, will stand no sudden shock such as chisels or axes are liable to. But most tools are of 'cast-steel,' to form which bits of blister-steel are melted in a crucible. This is then run into moulds and cast into ingots, after which the cooled metal is hammered and rolled.

There are many other kinds of steel; but it would be uninteresting to enumerate them all. There are as well many ingredients of steel besides iron and carbon, such as manganese, silicon, and nitrogen, which last is invariably present. But these are only combined in small quantities, and, except in a scientific journal, it would be unnecessary to enlarge upon this. Of course, they all influence the quality of the steel.

There are popular misconceptions on the subject of the tempering of steel. Steel is heated and then suddenly cooled in water or oil, in two quite different ways. In one case it is raised to a very high temperature; in the other, to a low one. The latter alone is 'tempering,' and alters the hardness of the steel. The same term is popularly applied to the other process, which simply makes the combination of iron and carbon a *chemical* combination, for it is not so till this is done.

On the subject of razor-edges we consulted a barber the other day, as he is the final authority on the subject. The cutler does not set a razor half as well, and charges more. 'People expect too much from their razors,' was the barber's verdict. 'They neglect the razor and only half-soap the beard, and then expect a shave which the best steel and the best barber in the world could not give.' All grit should in the first place be washed from the face (a very necessary precaution sometimes in a big city), the soaping should be carefully done, and invariably followed by rubbing with the hand, without which proper shaving is impossible. Last, but not least, the razor must be taken care of. It should naturally be kept dry, and warmed before use, if possible; and if stropped

at all, let it be done little and carefully. We say this, as it is better in nine cases out of ten to leave the stropping alone altogether, and take it to the barber's to be done when necessary. Stropping is a fine art, only gained by constant practice. It is a matter of common experience that a razor left for a while unused becomes blunt. Rust caused by the moisture in the atmosphere is quite enough to account for this. Shearers, for instance, who have to use particularly sharp instruments, never set their shears till just before using. What is not so generally known is that a razor which will not cut will become sharper sometimes by being left aside for some time. The only explanation of this is that the electrical properties of the metal in the edge become changed.

A 'wire edge' is commonly put on a tool by amateurs. The steel turns and folds back on itself. It is owing to the edge being made too long and thin, or the metal being too soft. The only cure for a wire edge is to break off the bent portion, and grind and set again.

'A knife that cuts butter when it is hot' (and under no other circumstances) we sometimes meet with. We have been going into the reasons of things, and the reason of this is easily explained. Heat expands metal, and in proportion to the amount of metal which is heated. There is more metal in the breadth of a blade than in its thickness, and the former, therefore, is expanded immensely more than the latter. In other words, the wedge-like shape is lengthened, and the tool becomes 'sharp.'

Many people have seen the following trick: A broomstick—a common or garden broomstick, as explained by the conjurer—is placed with its ends resting on two razors, their edges upwards of course. The conjurer takes another stick, strikes the broomstick in the middle, and breaks it in two. The razors do not mark the ends of the broomstick, nor are they themselves injured. The result is due to the well-known principle of 'inertia,' and has little to do with the substance of the razors. Pretty much the same could be done if the stick were lightly supported on a paper foundation, or swung in the air. The broomstick has a tendency to avoid motion of any kind when struck, and breaks. It is necessary that it be hit directly in the middle, and very sharply.

We have spoken of the electricity of an edge. The part it plays in making a tool sharp is probably considerable; but the point is, we believe, little understood, and certainly less written about. The importance of the proper sharpening of tools in carpentering can naturally hardly be exaggerated; workers in some departments of the art have told us that it is the whole secret—the work itself is easily learned. A good rough test of the sharpness of a tool—in carving, for example—is to take a piece of common deal, and cut at right angles to the grain. If in proper condition the blade will cut the wood clean, not splinter it.

QUEEN ELMA.

CHAPTER IV.



T was nearly half-an-hour before I saw the Count again.

'I am now just off to the Queen,' he said, with an air of great virtue.

'Haven't you been yet?' I cried.

'It is useless now.'

'Kata would not let me go,' he replied. 'When Slavoski left us he went straight to Kata, and congratulated her on her marriage, of which he said you had told him. What could the poor child do in the hands of a man like Slavoski? She has admitted the whole thing.'

'You should have gone to the Queen at once,' I said. 'It was your only chance.'

He shrugged his shoulders. 'Kata was a little inclined to be hysterical, and of course I could not leave her. Poor little Kata!'

'Heaven knows what will happen,' I murmured. There was in my mind a vivid recollection of the look I had seen in the Queen's face.

'What can't be helped must be endured,' he responded lightly.

'What madness to play with a woman like Elma!' I ejaculated.

'So I have always said,' remarked the Count casually, and nodding smilingly at the same moment to an acquaintance who passed; 'but they insisted on it. They said it was necessary for the success of our plans.' He pulled at his moustache.

'Who are "they"?'

He waved his hand vaguely. 'It is useless to give names,' he said. 'I allude to the friends with whom I have been acting.'

'Did they also insist on your marrying the Princess Kata?'

He smiled readily. 'Ah, no,' he said; 'that was an interpolation of my own.'

I was not a little exasperated at his composure. He seemed to be throwing away his chances in the most unconcerned manner.

'I don't believe you appreciate the gravity of the situation,' I said sharply.

'I think I do,' he answered. 'And in proof thereof I will go at once to the Queen.'

He made a movement as if to leave me, when, at that moment, the folding-doors were flung open, and the appearance of four footmen in the royal livery betokened the approach of the Queen. The dance in progress stopped at once. The Queen, on the arm of Slavoski, followed by her maids of honour, entered, and slowly made the circuit of the ballroom. Her face was deadly pale, and her eyes seemed alive with a strange light. As she passed us her gaze rested for a moment on Ulric, who bowed profoundly. No sign of recognition passed over her face. She

swept on, bowing right and left to her guests, who fell into two lines as she passed.

She then took her place on the dais at the end of the room, and signalled that the dance should be resumed. But before it had reached its end another interruption occurred. From the outer room we heard, above the strains of the band, the clank of swords and the sound of marching feet. The dance stopped in confusion as a party of armed guards appeared in the doorway. The officer in command saluted the Queen, and then passed up the hall to where we were standing, followed by his men. The dancers fell aside with pale, frightened faces, and a feeling of general consternation reigned.

When they had come up to the Count the officer halted them.

'I am instructed to arrest you, sir, on a charge of high treason,' he said. 'I would ask you for your sword.'

'Oh, certainly,' replied the Count, with an air of absolute good-humour. He unbuckled his belt and handed the equipment to the officer.

'You will be good enough to fall in,' said the officer.

The Count placed himself between a file of men, and the officer gave the command to march. The party passed out of the hall.

There was a panic-stricken silence in the room, and I saw a lady faint. Then the Queen stood up.

'Let the dance be resumed,' she said calmly. 'I will take my part. Come, Prince, we will dance together.'

The ambassador bowed, and taking her hand, led her to the centre of the floor. The dance began again.

When at length it had dragged through its mirthless course the Queen retired to her apartments, and the assembled guests began to take a hasty departure.

As I wandered forlorn through the quickly emptying rooms I met my uncle.

'You had better go home,' he said abruptly.

'And you?'

'Oh, I must try and see the Queen, and if possible stem her folly.'

'Is there any news?'

'Nothing; except that a court-martial has been summoned for midnight in the Queen's apartments. The mischief of it is, that Ulric, being in the army, comes under military and not the civil law. The officers are nearly all under Russian influence.'

He hurried on, and I fell back with a palpitating heart. I determined to follow my uncle's advice, and I made my way to the staircase.

As I passed a little recess I heard the sounds

of a woman sobbing. I drew aside the curtain that half-concealed the opening, and beheld a woman's form huddled upon a couch. I touched her gently on the arm.

'Can I help you?' I asked.

She looked up, startled. It was the Princess Kata. I pray God I may never see again on the face of a woman the look of loathing with which she regarded me.

'You—you—spy!' she gasped.

'Don't,' I cried, with sudden anguish.

'What harm had he done you? Why did you betray him?'

'Before God, it was unintentional. If I had but known'—

She flung up her arms with a despairing gesture.

'They have taken him away, and I shall never see him again. Elma will kill him; I saw it in her eyes.'

I tried to console her, but in vain.

'Save him, save him. Save my husband,' she kept moaning.

'By God, I will do so, or die myself!' I cried aloud, for all the world like the hero of an Adelphi melodrama. I was half-distraught by her tears and my own wretchedness. The intensity of my cry made her look up.

'Promise me you will save him,' she said, her blue eyes staring up into mine; and I—the absurdity of it strikes me now—swore solemnly he should not die. What she expected me to do I do not know. What I intended to do I had not the slightest conception; but at her words I sprang out into the passage, and ran like one possessed through the empty ballroom into the Queen's antechamber. Here I found a crowd of anxious waiters. I saw my uncle in earnest conversation with a tall, pale man I knew to be the Austrian ambassador. Slavoski was also here, standing apart, a smile of conscious triumph on his thin lips. As I passed I happened to brush against him. He turned, and his eye met mine.

'Am I not a true prophet?' he said. 'I have heard no announcement of the Queen's betrothal.'

I turned away silently. My uncle beckoned me to his side.

'What are you doing here?' he asked.

'I want to see the Queen.'

'What for?'

'The Lord knows—I don't,' I replied. The absurdity of my own position forced itself on me, and I nearly choked with foolish laughter.

My uncle looked at me steadily.

'You are overstrung, my lad,' he said. 'You had better go home to bed.'

'What is happening?'

'The court-martial is sitting.' He nodded towards the Queen's rooms. 'We are waiting to hear the result.'

'What will it be?'

He shook his head gloomily. 'Slavoski seems

to have no doubt.' And, indeed, there was on his face at that moment a look of diabolic triumph.

'Does it mean'—I began; but something in my throat checked me.

'I fear it means Ulric's death. An outraged woman is not likely to be inclined to mercy, and it is only her direct intervention that can save him. But we must hope for the best.'

I grasped my uncle's arm. 'He must not die,' I whispered. 'I shall feel I am his murderer.'

'Nonsense,' rejoined my uncle sharply. 'Don't let your brain get full of these morbid fancies.'

At that moment the doors opened and the guard came out. In the centre was Ulric, as gay and confident as ever. He nodded to my uncle as he passed through the anteroom, and then his eye fell on my face. I dare say I was looking pale and troubled, for he stopped.

'You must not fret, my friend,' he said kindly. 'No one can blame you.'

'What is the sentence?' asked my uncle. Every one stood in painful silence awaiting the answer. The officer in charge had been summoned back to the Queen's room; otherwise I doubt if any reply would have been allowed.

'To-morrow at daybreak, or, to be accurate, to-day at daybreak, I am to—die.'

He spoke lightly, but faltered at the last word. An indescribable hush fell over all in the room and every face paled.

Then Ulric turned to me.

'Will you send Father Wiemann to me? You will find him at the Jesuit College in the Goethe Strasse. Do not delay.'

'I will go at once,' I cried, thankful that he should have given me this task to perform. It seemed to seal his forgiveness.

'I suppose I must make my peace with Heaven. That is, I understand, the correct thing to do.' He looked round the room half-whimsically. 'There is not much time.'

The captain emerged from the Queen's apartment, and the word was given to march. Ulric waved his hand as he passed out of the room.

I made a movement to follow, but my uncle stopped me.

'Fetch the priest at once,' he said. 'Waste no time. Remember he dies in a few hours.'

'I know, I know,' I answered, choking with emotion. 'What awful cruelty!'

'You had better have an order for the priest's admittance.' My uncle crossed to a page who was standing by the door, and whispered to him. The latter disappeared into the Queen's room, and in a few minutes returned with the necessary order. It was brief enough—'Admit priest to Count Ulric of Lapsburg,' and then the Queen's seal. 'He is to be confined in one of the cells of the Rathhaus,' said my uncle, handing me the order.

I took it, and hastened from the anteroom, through the deserted ballroom, where the electric lights were glowing as brilliantly as ever, down

the marble staircase, where little groups of pale-faced attendants were talking together in uneasy whispers, through the massive doors, out into the cool gardens. I was without hat or overcoat, but, heedless of all, I hastened into the town. The streets were full of people, who were gaily chattering together, waiting no doubt for the termination of the royal ball. So far as I could judge in my hurried rush, the news of the dire events of the last few hours had not transpired. Many curious looks were cast on me as I hastened on, only stopping once to inquire the way to the Goethe Strasse. At last I found it, and easily enough gained the college to which I had been directed.

I hammered at the door, but for some time there was no response. At length I heard a window open, and a nightcapped head protruded from an upper story.

'What do you want? Who are you?' asked a voice.

'I must speak with Father Wiemann,' I shouted in reply.

'I am he.'

'Let me in. I must see you privately,' I shouted again.

'There is no necessity to speak so loud,' said the father in mild reproof, for indeed, whether from nervousness or from what cause I know not, I had been bellowing in a stentorian voice calculated to wake the dead.

'Hasten,' I said in a lower key. 'I come from the Count Ulric.'

The reverend father uttered an exclamation of surprise, and slammed to the window. In a few minutes I was admitted by the father, who stood shivering in the draughty passage, a lighted candle in his hand.

'Come upstairs,' he said, and led the way, I following him. He was an old man, and I noticed he walked feebly.

I blurted out my story. I sometimes wonder he was able to understand my incoherent words; but when he did, he hid his withered face in his hands and wept.

'Oh Ulric, my boy Ulric, that you should have come to this!'

I touched him on the shoulder. 'There is need of haste,' I observed.

'Yes, yes.' He looked wildly round, and seizing the first article of attire that came to hand, began hastily to dress himself.

I watched him for a few minutes. 'Surely your legs are not meant to go through that?' I remarked in wonder, after I had seen him vainly endeavouring to draw over his feet an article of dress obviously intended for another portion of his body.

'Oh no,' he agreed, after a scrutiny. 'I fear I am a little confused. My poor Ulric!' He broke down again; it was a pitiful sight to see the poor old man weeping.

'You knew him well?' I asked.

He looked up with streaming eyes. 'I brought him up. He was almost a son to me. But I must go to him! He must not die without me.'

I hesitated a moment, and then I crossed to him, and, with my hand on his shoulder, pressed him back to his seat.

'Listen,' I said. 'Why should he die at all?'

His eyes sought mine, but there was no intelligence in his look.

'What do you mean?' he asked.

'As a priest, they will let you see him alone.'

'Undoubtedly.'

'Why not change clothes with him, and so let him escape in your place?'

I saw the light of hope shining in his eyes. He thought a little. 'It is impossible,' he said at length, sadly. 'How could I pass for him?' He took off his nightcap, and the white hair tumbled about his brow. 'It is out of the question.'

I nodded quickly. 'That is obvious,' I said. 'But why should I not take your place? Disguise me in your clothes. The order for admission does not mention any name. Is it not worth trying?'

He shook his head. 'Ulric is too noble to allow another's life to be risked in his stead. What might not happen to you?'

'Nothing,' I replied impatiently. 'I am the nephew of the English ambassador. What could they do to me?'

He sat there mournfully shaking his head. 'If you are not successful, Ulric will die without the last offices of the Church.'

'We must risk something,' I replied. 'Come, help me. It is at least worth trying.'

It was not much aid he was able to give me, but at length I was dressed in clerical clothing. I glanced at myself in a glass, and drew back with a feeling of despair. My somewhat boyish face and close-cropped head looked ridiculous emerging from the sombre raiment of the priest.

'The largest hat you have,' I exclaimed. He gave me a soft felt, into which I buried my head. I wrapped a large scarf round my neck, covering up the lower part of my face.

'The rest I must leave to Providence,' I said.

'I will pray for you,' said Father Wiemann, standing regarding me with clasped hands.

'No, no,' I replied hastily. 'You have something else to do. See that a horse awaits the Count at the bridge on the Lapsburg road. He must get across the frontier to-night. Dress quickly; there is not a moment to be lost.'

With a manifest effort the poor old man pulled himself together, and began to dress himself with some degree of intelligence.

'Good-bye,' I said. 'You must hasten. All depends on you.'

'I will not fail,' he answered. 'May God prosper you.'

I went down the stairs again, and out into the street.

SOME EPIGRAMS.



PROVERB, according to Archbishop Whateley, is 'the wisdom of many and the wit of one;' and maxims have been described as 'the distilled drops of the experience of nations;'

but what phrase can most effectively give a definition of an epigram? According to Dr Johnson, an epigram is 'a short poem treating only of one thing, and ending with some lively, ingenious, and natural thought;' but this is surely too cumbrous a definition. The distinguishing characteristic of an epigram is its terse conciseness. An epigram should be at once graphic and laconic, pointed and poignant: a brilliant brevity. It is a quip and a quiddity, a pun, a parody, and a paradox, a repartee, *jeu d'esprit*, and a *bon mot*. It may be gay, like the flashes of Sydney Smith; cynical, like the acidities of Talleyrand; arrowy, like the drolleries of Charles Lamb; bitter, like the acerbities of Douglas Jerrold; broad, like the humours of Butler and the two Colmans; alliterative and antithetical, like the brilliancies of Lord Beaconsfield. But an epigram must be centrifugal and concentrated: a kind of Liebig's Extract of Literature. There must be no flourishes, no embroidery; 'no flowers, by request.'

Let it be the congenial concernment of the present annotator to recall a few famous epigrams of the past, both in verse and prose. Epigrams were wont to coruscate like the facets of diamonds at the dinner-parties given by Rogers the banker, and by the beautiful Marguerite Countess of Blessington; while in French *salons* Talleyrand, Piron, Fontenelle, Rivarol, and Chamfort supplied the colloquial scintillations of wit that were as dazzling and sharp as the scimitar of the Turk who could pass his weapon through a man's neck without hurting him. The victim used to grin with delighted surprise. 'Sneeze,' said the *sabreur Turque*. The executed one did so, and his head rolled on the floor.

But the old art of talking is extinct. Our dialogue has degenerated into a series of meteorological observations. It is not of the easy give-and-take order described by Dean Swift, who explains the whole art and mystery of conversation:

Conversation is but carving;
Give no more to every guest
Than he's able to digest;
Give him always of the prime,
And but little at a time:
Carve to all, but just enough;
Let them neither starve nor stuff;
And, that you may have your due,
Let your neighbours carve for you.'

In *Epigrams, most Elegant and Wittie*, by Sir John Harington, published in 1633, occurs one of the neatest of that order:

Treason doth never prosper; what's the reason?
For if it prosper, none dare call it treason.

Lord Byron thought Samuel Rogers's epigram on Ward (Lord Dudley) inimitable:

Ward has no heart, they say; but I deny it.
He has a heart, and gets his speeches by it.

Another Byron, Mr H. J. Byron of *Our Boys* fame, is responsible for the following military epigram:

Smart soldiers like to be well tightened in:
Loose habits would destroy all discipline.

Fontaine, the architect, who built the triumphal arch in the Carrousel in Paris, placed upon it an empty car drawn by the famous bronze horses of Venice. Talleyrand asked him, '*Qui avez vous l'intention de mettre dans le char?*' The answer was, '*L'Empereur Napoléon, comme de raison.*' Upon which Talleyrand said, '*Le char l'attend.*'

Thomas Hood came out with this loyal effusion:

Three traitors—Oxford, Francis, Bean—
Have missed their wicked aim;
And may all shots against the Queen
In future do the same.
For why—I mean no turn of wit,
But seriously insist,
That, if her Majesty were hit,
No one would be so missed.

Laman Blanchard showed a pretty wit in the ensuing impromptu on Maclise's portrait of Macready as 'Macbeth':

Maclise's 'Macready's Macbeth'
As a picture defies all attacks;
Yet, uniting these three in a breath,
It is only a view of *Al-macks*.

Poor Fritz in the *Grande Duchesse* acted an epigram when he took to the trade of teaching in order to learn something. Sydney Smith once said that clergymen might be divided into three classes: Nimrods, Ramrods, and Fishing-rods. It was not a bad epigram; but it has been beaten by an American, who, with special reference to the Erie Line, said that railways are built upon three gauges: Broad Gauge, Narrow Gauge, and Mortgage. The antithesis to an epigram is an euphemism which hides a disagreeable fact in a cloud of words. Here is one, also of American parentage: A man was asked the cause of his father's death, and replied that 'while addressing a large outdoor assemblage of people, who were listening to his remarks with the greatest interest, a portion of the platform upon which he was standing gave way beneath him, whereby he was precipitated several feet with such violence as to break his neck.' The man's father was hanged.

Here is a somewhat ill-natured epigram:

If a twin,
A Greek will at the breast begin
To rob his sister of her share
Of mother's milk with smiling air,
And less because he finds it sweet
Than from the deep instinct to cheat.

Let us return to the witticisms of Sydney

Smith. 'The whole story of my life,' he says, 'has been passed like a razor—in hot water or a scrape.' 'There is the same difference between his tongue and mine as between the minute and the hour hand; one goes twelve times as fast, and the other signifies twelve times as much.' 'My house is just now full of cousins. They are all first cousins, and I wish them—once removed.' 'The Church's ordinances of feasts and fasts are tolerably well kept up. The rich keep the feasts and the poor the fasts.' 'If you masthead a sailor for not doing his duty, why should you not weathercock a parishioner for not paying his tithes?' 'Gout is the only enemy which I don't wish to have at my feet.'

The following epigrams were exchanged between James Smith and Sir George Stewart Rose on the subject of Craven Street, Strand, where the former was then residing:

James Smith.

At the top of my street the attorneys abound,
And down at the bottom the barges are found.
Fly, Honesty! fly to some safer retreat,
For there's craft in the river and craft in the street.

Sir George Rose.

Why should Honesty fly to some safer retreat,
From attorneys and barges? odd rot 'em!
For the lawyers are just at the top of the street,
And the barges are just at the bottom.

Lord Erskine fathers the following:

The French have taste in all they do,
Which we are quite without;
For Nature, that to them gave *gout*,
To us gave only gout.

Mr J. Outram, on hearing a lady praise a certain reverend doctor's eyes, exclaimed:

I cannot praise the doctor's eyes;
I never saw his glance divine.
He always shuts them when he prays,
And when he preaches he shuts mine.

Francis Fuller, *apud* Nicholls, has an ambidextrous couplet on a left-handed writing-master:

Though Nature thee of thy right hand bereft,
Right well thou writest with the hand that's left.

Mr Austin Dobson is always daintily:

You snared me, Rose, with ribbons,
Your rose-mouth made me thrall.
Brief, briefer far than Gibbon's
Was my *Decline and Fall*.

Mr Shirley Brooks puts the following in the mouth of Jenner on hearing in Elysium that complaints had been made of his having a statue in Trafalgar Square:

England, ingratitude still blots
The escutcheon of the brave and free:
I saved you many million spots,
And now you grudge one spot to me.

The following on the marriage of a Mr Lot and a Miss Salter is by Mr J. C. Young:

Because on her way she thought proper to halt,
Lot's wife, in the Scriptures, was turned into salt;
But though in her course she never did falter,
This young Lot's wife, strange to say, was Salter.

At some country house, where a dramatic piece founded on *Ivanhoe* was to be performed, Lord Alvanley was requested to play the part of Isaac of York. He declined, saying, 'I never could do a Jew in my life.' Theodore Hook was dining at Powell's one day, says H. F. Chorley in his *Life and Letters*, and the talk fell upon *feu* Jack Reeve. 'Yes,' said Hook, when they were speaking of his funeral, 'I met him in his private box going to the pit.' Once more Thomas Hood—this time on the Art Unions:

That picture-raftles will conduce to nourish
Design, or cause good colouring to flourish,
Admits of logic-chopping and wise-sawing:
But surely lotteries encourage drawing?

One from the Greek:

A viper bit a Cappadocian's hide;
But 'twas the viper, not the man, that died.

Oliver Goldsmith has the same idea in his *Elegy on the Death of a Mad Dog*:

The wound it seemed both sore and sad
To every Christian eye;
And while they swore the dog was mad,
They swore the man would die.

But soon a wonder came to light,
That showed the rogues they lied;
The man recovered of the bite,
The dog it was that died.

James Smith, joint-author of the *Rejected Addresses*, contributes to our collection:

As late the Trades Unions, by way of a show,
Over Westminster Bridge strutted five in a row,
'I feel for the bridge,' whispered Dick, with a shiver;
'Thus tried by the mob it may sink in the river.'
Quoth Tom (a Crown lawyer), 'Abandon your fears;
As a bridge it can only be tried by its piers.'

Concerning Socialism, Sir William Leng paraphrases Ebenezer Elliott:

What is a Communist? One who has yearnings
For equal division of unequal earnings;
Idler, or bungler, or both, he is willing
To fork out his penny and—pocket your *shilling*.

Bushe, the Irish Chief-Baron, made this impromptu verse upon two agitators who had refused to fight duels, one on account of his affection for his wife, and the other because of his love for his daughter:

Two heroes of Erin, abhorrent of slaughter,
Improved on the Hebrew command—
One honoured his wife, and the other his daughter,
That his days might be long in the land.

James Smith again obliges us:

'To this night's masquerade,' quoth Dick,
'By pleasure I am beckoned;
And think 'twould be a pleasant trick
To go as Charles the Second.'

Tom felt for repartee athirst,
And thus to Richard said:
'You'd better go as Charles the First,
For that requires no head.'

The same author responds to our *encore* with these lines:

To Flavia's shrine two suitors run
And woo the fair at once;
A needy fortune-hunter one,
And one a wealthy dunce.

How, thus twin-courted, she'll behave
Depends upon this rule—
If she's a fool she'll wed the knave,
And if a knave the fool.

'The prospect's always fine in the prospectus!'
is the epigrammatic reflection of J. R. Planché.

Mortimer Collins is droll at the expense of
Charles Darwin in the following:

There was an Ape in the days that were earlier;
Centuries passed, and his hair became curlier:
Centuries more gave a thumb to his wrist—
Then he was a Man, and a Positivist.

A beautiful woman, who wore on her bosom a
miniature of her husband, a very ugly man,
asked Thomas Moore, the Irish poet, what he
thought of it. 'I think,' said he, 'that it is like
the Saracen's Head on Snow Hill.' Lord Brougham
defined a lawyer as 'a legal gentleman who rescues
your estate from your enemies and keeps it him-
self.' Hicks and Thackeray, walking together,
stopped opposite a doorway over which was in-
scribed in gold letters these words: 'Mutual Loan
Office.' They both seemed equally puzzled.
'What on earth can that mean?' asked Hicks.
'I don't know,' answered Thackeray, 'unless it
means that two men, who have nothing, agree to
lend it to another.' One would almost as soon
expect to see Thomas Carlyle at Cremorne Gardens
as Dr Johnson among the Epigrammists, yet the
ponderous lexicographer penned this pretty trifle:

If a man who turnsip cries,
Cry not when his father dies,
'Tis a proof that he would rather
Have a turnip than a father.

Stay! Dr Johnson was, after all, not wanting in
the *vis comica*. When he had finished the work
which laid the foundation of most English diction-
aries, he asked the man who had carried the last
sheet to Millar, the publisher, 'What did he say?'
'Sir,' said the messenger, 'he said, "Thank God, I
have done with him!"' And Ursa Major, in his
grandest style, replied, 'I am glad he thanks God
for anything.' The mention of dictionaries re-
calls a reminiscence of one of H. J. Byron's plays.
The point lies between a play upon words and an
expression of opinion. Two rival names are men-
tioned in it, both so good that the one comple-
ments the other, like two harmonious colours on
a painter's palette. The heroine of the comedy is
a bright American girl, full of fun and patriotism.
Praising her own country at the expense of the
hero (her lover, by the way), she tells him that
America has had even to undertake the task of
teaching England how to spell; *apropos* of which
she triumphantly demands: 'What do you say to
Webster?' 'Walker!' replies the Englishman.

The wedded state is a favourite subject with the
epigram-makers. From a very old ballad we take this:

There was a criminal in a cart
A-going to be hanged;
Respite to him was granted,
And cart and crowd did stand,
To know if he would marry a wife
Or rather choose to die;
'T'other's the worst—drive on the cart!'
The criminal did reply.

More modern is this verse:

I would advise a man to pause
Before he takes a wife;
In fact, I see no earthly cause
He should not pause for life.

Who, by the way, is the author who describes a
second marriage as being 'the triumph of hope
over experience'?

Samuel Lover's matrimonial epigram is very
apposite:

Though matches are all made in heaven, they say,
Yet Hymen (who mischief oft hatches)
Sometimes deals with the house t'other side of the way,
And there they make Lucifer matches.

'Marriage,' says Selden, 'is a desperate thing.
The frogs in *Æsop* were extremely wise; they
had a great mind to some water, but they
would not leap into the well, because they
could not get out again.' 'They say a parson
invented gunpowder,' observes Douglas Jerrold;
'but one cannot believe it till one is married.'
The same lively wit tells us: 'My notion of a
wife at forty is that a man should be able to
change her, like a bank-note, for two twenties.'
Somebody told George Colman that a certain actor,
by the death of his wife, 'had suffered a loss he
would not soon be able to *make up*.' Colman
dryly said: 'To tell you the truth, I don't believe
that he has quarrelled with his loss yet.' Samuel
Foote was much bored by a pompous physician
at Bath, who told him that he thought of publish-
ing his own poems, but had so many irons in the
fire that he really didn't know what to do. 'Take
my advice, doctor,' said Foote, 'and put your
poems where your irons are.'

Garrick's happy lines on Sir John Hill in his
double faculty of physician and playwright are
well known:

For physic and farces his equal there scarce is;
His farce is a physic, his physic a farce is.

Some other wit thus supplemented the couplet:

The worst that we wish thee, for all thy vile crimes,
Is to take thine own physic and read thine own rhymes.

Nor did it end here. Malice, like echo, caught up
the perishing strain, and the last epigram was the
best of the three:

No! let the order be reversed,
Or he'll not rue his crimes;
For if he takes his physic first,
He'll never read his rhymes.

Very pungent indeed was the remark of the
old Scotchwoman who, when advised by her
minister to take snuff with her to keep her awake

in the kirk while he was preaching, replied: 'Why dinna ye put the snuff in the sermon, mon?' 'Some men preach,' said Sydney Smith, 'as if they thought sin was to be taken out of a man as Eve was taken out of Adam—by casting him into a profound slumber.' 'I wonder, Mr Spurgeon,' said an old, respected minister to the orator of the Tabernacle, 'that you allow yourself such freedom, and discredit your calling by making so many jokes in the pulpit.' 'Ah!' replied Mr Spurgeon, 'you would not wonder at all if you knew how many more I kept to myself.' The Rev. Rowland Hill said once to some people who had entered his chapel to avoid the rain: 'Many people are to be blamed for making religion a cloak; but I do not think those much better who make it an umbrella.'

A cunning choice of texts has always been a favourite device with quaint preachers. Of two rival candidates for a lectureship on trial, the one preached in the morning on '*Adam, where art thou?*' His rival, in the evening, capped the text with '*Lo! here am I,*' and his ready wit is said to have won the scholarship. The late Bishop of Worcester hated church congresses and all similar assemblies, and never allowed one to be held in his diocese. One day one of his chaplains told his lordship that he had been invited to preach at a congress, and was busy getting ready his sermon. 'What text have you chosen?' asked the bishop. 'In the multitude of counsellors there is wisdom,' was the reply. 'Oh, indeed,' said my lord, 'Allow me to suggest another: "The talk of the lips tendeth to penury."'

ACONCAGUA.



CONCAGUA is probably the highest mountain in the New World. Moreover, it stands within a hundred miles of the Pacific, from which it is often visible to those who pass in ships, and within eighty miles

of the capital of Chili, the most advanced and prosperous of the South American states. There is, therefore, nothing to surprise us in the fact that two important scientific expeditions have in recent years attacked it, one German and one English. It is proposed to give a short account of each.

Dr Paul Güssfeldt's name is known to all readers of Alpine literature, and he was already familiar with the chief summits of the Alps when in the autumn of 1882 he landed at Valparaiso, accompanied by a well-known Swiss guide. Unfortunately the guide fell ill on the voyage, and soon after their arrival in Chili insisted on returning to his native land. Dr Güssfeldt recognised at once that the loss of his European companion would probably make it impossible for him to accomplish the high ascents that he had planned. Yet he determined to make the best of a bad business, compelled as he was to depend altogether on the natives for assistance, and to be his own guide in a district of which no reliable map existed.

In December and January he made expeditions in the mountains to the south-east of Santiago, crossing the Cordilleras into Argentine territory by passes of 13,000 and 11,000 feet, and returning by a route farther north by passes of 12,000 feet besides ascending the volcano of Maipo, 17,717 feet. It was in February 1883 that he set out on his chief enterprise, the ascent of Aconcagua. Crossing the western Cordillera by a pass lying to the north-north-west of the mountain and about thirty miles distant from it, he made his way up the

Valle Hermoso and established his camp at a height of 11,750 feet. Leaving this base at 4 P.M. on February 20, he was able to ride for three hours farther up the valley. Then, with two natives as companions, favoured by a brilliant moon, he first climbed a long *coulouir*, or gully, near the foot of which lay an unknown skeleton with a few tattered rags clinging round it. The *coulouir* presented no difficulty, and thus he gained the summit of the ridge at the head of the valley up which he had been travelling. A glacier two miles wide now lay before him, and beyond it the slopes of the great mountain, bare of snow for the most part, and rising at an angle of from 30° to 40° to a height of more than 6000 feet above the ground on which he was standing. The crossing of the glacier offered no serious difficulty, free as it was from snow and 'resembling a ploughed field'; indeed, during the whole expedition the travellers never had occasion to rope themselves together. At 1.50 A.M. they set foot on the mountain itself, and thenceforward the ascent was characterised by its extreme monotony. Moving slowly and with frequent halts, they followed a sort of broad ridge. Of climbing strictly speaking there was none. But the farther they advanced the greater became the difficulty of breathing, and all suffered from pains in the legs. The cold was severe—14° Fahr.—but not excessive, and the wind began to rise. At 10 A.M. one of his companions gave up, at a height of over 20,000 feet; but Dr Güssfeldt went on with the other, in ever-increasing distress, until at 12.30 they had reached a height of 21,523 feet, by boiling-point observation. Clouds now settled on the summit that seemed so near, and sleet began to fall, and very soon they were assailed by a 'tourmente,' or whirlwind of snow, the most dreaded of all dangers on high mountains. To persist would have been madness; so they descended in haste,

picking up on the way the comrade who had stayed behind, and regained their camp in the valley after an absence of thirty-one hours.

On March 3 the attempt was repeated. With the same companions and following the same route, Dr Güssfeldt crossed the great glacier above mentioned, and bivouacked among the rocks, without light or fire, at a height of 17,390 feet, all three packed into a sleeping-bag that was made to hold two. Next morning they resumed their slow and painful march; but about noon bad weather once more compelled them to retreat before they had attained so great a height as on February 21. That they should have accomplished what they did is indeed remarkable, seeing that the two Chileños were unused to mountaineering, and that Dr Güssfeldt was suffering during his second attempt from a raging toothache, which robbed him of rest at night and made it impossible for him to take any solid food. And there can be little doubt that he would have succeeded in ascending the great mountain if he had had the moral and material support of even one European companion, such as the Swiss guide of whose services he had been so unfortunately deprived. For the scientific results of his journey, his geological and botanical collections and the careful series of observations on which his maps are based, the reader must consult his book, *Reise in den Andes von Chile und Argentinien* (Berlin, 1888). Twenty admirable photographs at the end of the book give a vivid picture of the dreary scenery of this portion of the Andes. Thus, while the aspect of the mountain as seen from the east is exceedingly grand, reminding one of the southern face of Monte Rosa, from the west it is disappointing; and the moderate angle at which its stony slopes rise, together with the remarkable absence of snow on its upper parts, make it difficult for the observer to believe that he has actually before him the loftiest summit of the Andes. This is well brought out in a paper by Mr W. E. Hall that appeared in the *Alpine Journal* in 1869. 'Looking out of my window,' he writes, 'the morning after my arrival at Valparaiso, my eye rested on a considerable peak rising conspicuously in the direction of the Andes. It had large patches of snow upon it' (this was in October, the beginning of summer), 'but, on the whole, it was rather a rock than a snow mountain; and as its contour was not precipitous, this, together with the extraordinary degree to which its details were distinctly visible, made me suppose it was some outlying buttress of the chain. It was only in the evening, when I chanced to be on board the English surveying ship *Nassau*, that I learned that I had been staring all day from ninety-five miles off at a mountain of 23,600 feet, through an air so disagreeably harsh that I was able not only to draw the outline accurately, but to mark the exact forms of snow and rock.'

Mr E. A. FitzGerald's well-equipped expedition landed at Buenos Ayres in November 1896. Besides his English companions, he had with him several Swiss porters and the famous Alpine guide, Matthias Zurbriggen, who had accompanied Sir Martin Conway in his Himalayan expedition in 1893, and had climbed the highest peaks of the New Zealand Alps with Mr FitzGerald himself in 1895. Early in December they reached Punta de las Vacas, 8000 feet above sea-level, the farthest point to which the Trans-Andean Railway had been carried, and established their base of operations for the next five months at Puente del Inca, twelve miles farther up the valley, a remarkable natural bridge that crosses the Rio de las Cuevas a short distance below its junction with the stream from the Horcones valley. An excellent idea of the scenery of these valleys and their glaciers, lying to the south of Aconcagua, can be gained from the large series of beautiful photographs reproduced in colotype in Habel's *Ansichten aus Südamerika* (Berlin, 1897). The book also contains a good sketch-map by the author, but his work was unfortunately cut short in 1895 by the Argentine authorities, who considered further explorations inexpedient, pending the settlement of their dispute with Chili regarding the frontier.

On December 23 Mr FitzGerald and Zurbriggen, with four Swiss porters and ten mules, made their way up the Horcones valley and passed round to the west side of Aconcagua, camping at a height of 14,000 feet. On Christmas-day they camped at 18,700 feet; and next day, while exploring, Zurbriggen found Dr Güssfeldt's card in a tin box left by him at the highest point he had reached fourteen years before. Bad weather and want of supplies then forced them to descend. A second attempt, undertaken a few days later, failed from the same causes, and they went down to Puente del Inca to recruit, Zurbriggen being nearly drowned in a torrent on the way. Returning to the attack a week later, they succeeded, on January 14, 1897, in reaching the *arête*, or ridge, between the two summits. Here Mr FitzGerald was forced by severe illness to turn back, and Zurbriggen struggled on alone, reaching the top at 5 P.M. He is Italian by nationality, his home being at Macugnaga, to the south of Monte Rosa; and the Italians may well be proud of the fact that in the same year men from Italy have achieved the first ascent of two such mighty mountains as Aconcagua and Mount St Elias in Alaska.

A month later Mr FitzGerald made his sixth gallant but unsuccessful attempt. The party camped for fourteen days at an altitude of 18,700 feet, in intense cold, with a violent gale blowing. In the London *Daily Chronicle*, in which appeared the first accounts of the expedition, Mr FitzGerald thus describes the pleasures of living at this height in the Andes: 'You pant like a dying consumptive; then the dust, which smothers every-

thing, gets into your throat and chokes you; you cough exhaustingly and pant worse than ever. Every effort, however slight, entails a fresh effort of will, and your only desire in the world is to give up the whole thing and get down. At times the view was indescribably splendid, but as a rule dust-storms blotted out the sky. Rain never falls at these heights.' Starting from this camp at 8 A.M., Mr Stuart Vines, the geologist of the expedition, and an Italian porter, gained the summit in nine hours. Owing to the violence and persistence of the wind, snow only lies in great patches on the peak. Avoiding these, they struggled up through deep masses of rotten, rocky material, slipping back two feet for every three they stepped. During the latter portion of the ascent they were forced to stop every four or five yards for two or three minutes, stooping forward to recover breath. They remained an hour on the summit, which they measured and found to be a small plateau seventy yards square. The view was magnificent, and the Pacific, one hundred miles away, resembled a vast, unruffled pond. In the afternoon, when the sun shone in the west, the ocean appeared like an immense conflagration or tract of fire. The clouds, however, only parted occasionally, and a sort of haziness prevailed throughout the day. Respiration was exceedingly difficult, and finally a gale arose, which prevented a longer stay.

On the east side the mountain falls away in a stupendous precipice of 10,000 feet, with hanging glaciers that feed a considerable glacier below. Two other glaciers occupy the heads of the glens to the south and west, which drain into the Horcones torrent, while to the north-west lies the great glacier crossed by Dr Güssfeldt.

It will be seen from what has been said that the difficulties encountered through bad weather, exposure to severe cold, and above all the dreaded 'puna,' or mountain sickness, were of no ordinary character. To these must be added, at lower levels, the dangers from mountain torrents, in fording which several of the party had narrow escapes from drowning. Add to this that they all suffered more or less from fever, and that the mountain streams were poisonous, owing to the presence of some mineral in the water which caused violent diarrhoea, while before they left the mountains in June heavy snowfalls blocked the ways and made it very difficult to carry out the survey and photographic work. For the scientific results of the expedition we must wait for the appearance of Mr FitzGerald's book, which was unfortunately delayed by the severe illness of the author. In the meantime it is interesting to note that he fixes the height of the mountain provisionally at 'a trifle over 23,000 feet.' The height assigned to Aconcagua by Dr Güssfeldt, after careful trigonometrical measurement, was 22,868 feet. This is higher by 268 feet than the Pioneer Peak, ascended by Sir Martin Conway in

1893, in the Himalayas north of Kashmir. But it would seem that what it is the fashion to call the 'record' in mountain-climbing is still held by Mr W. W. Graham, who, with the late Emil Boss of Grindelwald and a well-known Swiss guide, Ulrich Kaufmann, reached in 1883 a point within thirty feet of the summit of Kabru in the Sikkim Himalayas. It is true that attempts have been made to throw doubt on this achievement. It has been argued, on purely *a priori* grounds, that at such a height the party must have suffered more from the effects of diminished atmospheric pressure than appears from Mr Graham's account, read before the Royal Geographical Society (*Proceedings of the R.G.S.*, Aug. 1884). And, as there is no question as to the height of Kabru, which has been fixed trigonometrically by the Government Survey at 24,015 feet, it has been suggested that they were mistaken in their identification of the peak that they ascended. But the day was cloudless; Mr Graham was familiar with the country (it was his second visit to Sikkim), and he was furnished with the best maps. Moreover, in the familiar panoramic view of the range as seen from Darjeeling, Kabru is a very prominent object, easily identified, to the west of Kinchinjanga, the loftiest peak in the view. In the face of these facts, *a priori* objections of the nature stated can have little weight, especially as what is familiarly known as 'mountain sickness' is as yet imperfectly understood, but is known to be largely dependent on local causes and to affect different individuals in very different ways. The whole question has been very thoroughly dealt with by Mr Douglas Freshfield in the *Alpine Journal* for February 1898, to which readers interested in the question are referred. Mr Freshfield shows that most of the arguments which can be adduced to-day for asserting that the limit of human powers is reached at about 23,000 feet might have been equally well adduced a hundred years ago to prove that the limit lay at about 16,000 feet; and he expresses his belief that in the next century the Alpine Club will carry the limit 6000 feet higher still.

TO ITALY.

O ITALY, my country! thou endowed
With hapless gift of beauty, whence arose
The fatal heritage of endless woes
That fill thy lovely eyes with tears and cloud
Thy brow. Ah! wert thou not so fair, or proud
With ancient might to fill with dread thy foes,
Whose heart with all the spoiler's fervour glows,
Yet feels no pity for thee, spent and bowed—
Then ne'er should I behold down Alpine heights
Grim warriors pour, nor see the bloody wave
Of Po quaffed thus by steeds of Gallic knights;
Nor see thee, widowed of thy trusty glaive,
With hireling succour trust to win thy rights,
And, conquering or conquered, bide a slave.

GEORGE MONREAL.